

VAVS RECOGNITION FOR STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEERS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook sets forth how VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) will recognize volunteers in State Veterans Homes (SVHs).
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENT:** VAVS recognition for SVH Volunteers has been established to offer the opportunity for volunteers who provide service to veterans in a SVH to receive recognition from VAVS. Guidelines are included for a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that must be established between each of the State Veterans Homes, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility of jurisdiction to accomplish this recognition.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Directive 1620, and VHA Handbook 1620.1.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) is responsible for the contents of this handbook.
- 5. RECISSIONS:** None.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for re-certification on or before the last working day of November 2006.

Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides guidance for Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Offices at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities in recognizing volunteers for their service to veterans receiving care at State Veterans Homes (SVH).

2. BACKGROUND

In May, 2001, the Executive Committee to the VAVS National Advisory Committee concurred with the recommendation of a VAVS ad hoc committee to develop procedures to formally recognize volunteers who provide service in SVHs. Although volunteers at SVHs are not VAVS volunteers, because they are not assigned or supervised by a VA employee, SVH volunteers will be allowed to receive VAVS recognition. The SVH is responsible for the management and legal liability of the SVH volunteers. All SVH administrators, VA networks, and VA facilities of jurisdiction for a SVH are to be notified of the recognition opportunity for SVH volunteers.

3. AUTHORITY

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has given VAVS the authority for SVH volunteers to be recognized for their service to veterans.

4. ACTION

a. **Responsibilities of VAVS.** It is the responsibility of VAVS to:

(1) Establish a local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SVH and the VA medical center of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see App. A).

(2) Develop an assignment code(s) for volunteers in SVH.

(3) Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into the VAVS timekeeping system.

(4) Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

(5) Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS awards system, combining these SVH hours with VAVS hours.

b. **SVH Responsibilities.** It is the responsibility of the SVH to:

(1) Establish a local MOU between the VA medical center of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see App. A).

(2) Inform SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by VA. If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information (see App. B).

(3) Forward a copy of required information to the VA Voluntary Service Program manager.

(4) Provide timekeeping data to VA by the first work day of each month, i.e., name, date the volunteer worked, number of hours on each date, and affiliated organization.

(5) Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

c. **SVH Volunteer Responsibilities.** The responsibilities of the SVH volunteer include:

(1) Dual-appointment volunteers must make a request to participate in this program, provide necessary information and authorize SVH to share this with VAVS.

(2) SVH volunteers must make the request to participate in the VAVS program and authorize SVH management to share all necessary information with VAVS program of jurisdiction.

5. DEFINITIONS

a. **SVH Volunteer.** A SVH Volunteer is an individual who volunteers at a SVH under the management and supervision of SVH personnel.

b. **VAVS Volunteer.** A VAVS volunteer is an individual who volunteers in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled (RS) assignment under the management and supervision of VA personnel, and who is appointed as a without compensation (WOC) employee.

c. **Dual-Appointment (SVH-VA) Volunteer.** A dual-appointment volunteer is an individual who volunteers both at a SVH and at a VHA facility.

d. **VA Volunteer Assigned to SVH.** An individual in the VAVS Program whose VA assignment is located at a SVH, and who is considered under the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) and injury compensation laws (see Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 81).

e. **Recognition.** Recognition will consist of the following: ***NOTE:** Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgment and the sense of belonging to the health care team.*

(1) **Certificates.** Certificates used to recognize SVH volunteer hours for the current award year.

(2) **VAVS Awards.** Dual-appointment volunteers will be recognized for the cumulative hours served at both the SVH and VA.

***NOTE:** Credit toward Certificates and VAVS Awards will not be awarded for service prior to the date of the MOU between the SVA and the VA medical center.*

6. TIMEKEEPING

The timekeeping process for tracking the service of both SVH volunteers and dual-appointment volunteers will be established between the SVH and the VA medical center. VA will, however, enter both SVH and dual-volunteers into its timekeeping system using the appropriate codes for SVH volunteer or dual-appointment volunteers respectively (see App. C).

**SAMPLE OF
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN A STATE VETERANS
HOME (SVH) AND A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) MEDICAL
CENTER**

1. Purpose. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the responsibilities of the ____ (VA facility)____ and ____ (name)____ State Veterans Home(s), for recognition of State Veterans Home (SVH) volunteers who provide volunteer service to veterans receiving care in SVH.

2. Responsibilities of SVHs. The SVH is responsible for:

a. Informing SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information (see App. B).

b. Forwarding a copy of this information to the VAVS Program Manager.

c. Providing timekeeping data to VAVS by the first work day of each month, i.e., dates the volunteer worked and the number of hours on each date.

d. Developing a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

3. Responsibilities of VAVS. It is the responsibility of VAVS staff to:

a. Develop assignment code(s) for volunteers in the SVH.

b. Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into VAVS timekeeping.

c. Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

d. Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS Awards system, crediting these SVH hours with other VAVS hours.

(SAMPLE)
STATE VETERANS HOME
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: (_____) _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____
(Optional)

Organization Affiliation: _____

Other Information:

SAMPLE MONTHLY VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY RECORD

Name of State Veterans Home: _____

Month Covered: _____

Year: _____

<u>Volunteer Name</u> (Please print)		<u>Last 4</u> <u>#'s</u> Of SSN	Date MM/DD/YY	<u>Hours Served</u> (Whole Hours)	<u>Organization</u> Affiliation
Last	First				
			<u>Total</u> <u>Hours:</u>		

VA Facility where individuals volunteer: